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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION WASHINGTON, D. C.

CATALOGING - PREP.

May 28, 1973



Did you know that Americans eat about 60 pounds of fresh potatoes each year?

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What's a "new" potato? Usually harvested from January through September, "new" potatoes are freshly-dug fall crop potatoes which are not quite fully matured.

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Potatoes are not more fattening than other foods. Remember—a boiled, pressure-cooked, or baked medium-sized potato provides only about 100 calories. Would you believe—that compares to an apple or banana?

* * *

Like fried potatoes? They may be two to four times as high in calories as a plain baked potato, according to USDA home economists.

* * *

Find a rock in your potato bag? Return the rock to your grocer—and he will give you the rock's weight in real potatoes. They sometimes look so much like a potato that they get into the bag occasionally because most harvesting and packing is done today by machine.

In This Issue:

1. Checking on D.E.S.
2. On Beef and Onions
3. USDA Proposal/Meat Products
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U.S.D.A. . . . on DES

USDA will keep checking for residues of the synthetic growth promoter, diethylstilbestrol ("D-E-S") in meat. The Food and Drug Administration banned use of the drug as an implant in livestock the end of April. But—cattle legally given DES implants until that time will still be coming to slaughter for another few months.

U.S. Department of Agriculture meat inspectors will continue to sample animals at the current rate—approximately 6,000 samples yearly. USDA laboratories will test the samples by gas chromatography, the most advanced procedure now available for examining samples from slaughtered animals (this method can detect DES residues in amounts as small as 0.5 parts per billion in an animal's tissue). As in the past, any positive result will be reported to FDA for appropriate action.

While the exact economic impact of banning DES implants is not known, a 1971 study by USDA based on use of DES as an additive to feed resulted in an estimate that banning DES could cost consumers several hundred million dollars annually. Use of alternative approved implants to make animals gain weight more quickly may reduce the economic impact.

ON BEEF AND ONIONS

—and looking ahead

Beef and onion lovers will be interested in some optimistic views by U. S. Department of Agriculture economists.

...Livestock watchers say that lower cattle prices (within the next year or so) could result in a drop in beef prices at the supermarket.

...Outlook is that onion prices will also decline after the summer harvest in July. Acreage for that crop is up a sizeable 9 percent from a year ago.

On the beef situation—when beef prices are high and rising, cattlemen react in a predictable fashion. They make plans to expand their herds to take advantage of the good prices. But, sometimes, cattlemen overexpand. Slaughter supplies become greater than the market can bear, prices take a dip. This is discouraging so they don't hold extra heifers for herd expansion. This makes even more cattle available for slaughter, causing prices to decline further.

So—Economic Research Service of USDA figures that U.S. cattle inventory will be large enough to support sizeable gains in slaughter—lower cattle prices should be translated into less expensive beef at the supermarket. Even so, retail prices aren't likely to fall back to the levels of the mid-1960's—because of general inflation, coupled with the unprecedented American demand for beef. This year's gain could amount to as much as three pounds per person, pushing our yearly per capita beef consumption to a record 119 pounds.

On the onion situation -- Usually the important spring onion crop in Texas is harvested by mid-March, but this year wet weather hurt quality and kept harvest workers out of the field. Imports from Mexico are more than double year-earlier levels but with the domestic storage stocks being low, the supplies remained low.
(More on the onion situation next week.)

WRITE A CONSUMER LINE...TO USDA*

IF IT'S A "LUSHUS PUP"...

What is it?

You'll have more help in identifying nutritionally fortified meat products if a new U.S. Department of Agriculture proposal—which you can comment on—is adopted. These products are currently required, under Federal meat inspection regulations, to be labeled "imitation". The term has been criticized for telling little about the product, and in some cases, misleading the consumer.

The proposed USDA change would allow manufacturers to call nutritionally fortified products by fanciful or distinctive names as long as the product compares favorably in nutritional value with the product it resembles. A hot dog, for example, which contains less meat than required under current meat inspection regulations—but is made nutritious by the addition of isolated soy protein—would be allowed to be labeled with a name like "Lushus Pup" or "Meat and Isolated Soy Protein Stick". Or, it could still be called an "imitation hot dog" if the manufacturer desires.

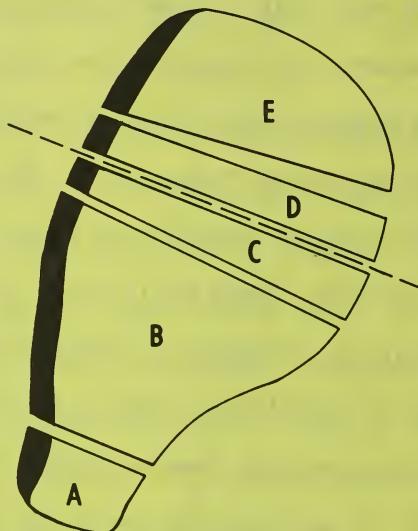
However—to use fanciful or distinctive names, the quality and quantity of protein—and the mineral and vitamin content in the nutritionally fortified meat product would have to equal 90 to 150 percent of these substances in the meat product it resembles.

An important feature of the proposal is: the ingredient statement on the label would have to list the percentage of nutritionally fortifying ingredients in the product formula. Listing all ingredients by name is already required—and would continue to be.

*Your comments are invited. Send them—in duplicate, please—to the USDA Hearing Clerk, Washington, D.C. 20250 by July 6.

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT _____
HAM?

BUTT END OR PORTION	E
BUTT HALF	D,E
CENTER SLICES	C,D
SHANKLESS HAM	B,C,D,E
WHOLE HAM	A,B,C,D,E
SHANK HALF	A,B,C
SHANK END OR PORTION	A,B
HAM HOCK	A



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NEW SLIDE SET AVAILABLE —

"The Peaceful Revolutionists"

How do the food prices and living standards in the United States compare to other countries in the world? In terms of average wages in other countries—how do we compare? "The Peaceful Revolutionists" is a new 195 frame color slide presentation which shows how today's food prices, eating habits and average wages do compare—today and in the past. A cassette soundtrack and illustrated narrative guide is included.

The new slide set is available from: Photography Division, Office of Communication, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250 for \$50. A 35 mm-frame filmstrip version may be purchased from the Photo Lab, Inc., 3825 Georgia Ave., Washington, D.C. 20011 for \$20.

COMMENTS & INQUIRIES TO:

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